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# Debriefing the press: 'Exclusive to the CIA'

by William Worthy

In April 1961, a few days after the unsuccessful Bay of Pigs invasion of Cuba, Allen Dulles, at that time the director of the Central Intelligence Agency, met in off-the-record session with the American Society of Newspaper Editors at their annual convention.

Given the Cuba intelligence, by then obviously faulty, that had entered into Washington's rosy advance calculations, he inevitably was pressed to tell: "Just what are the sources of the CIA's information about other countries?"

One source, Dulles replied, was U. S. foreign correspondents who are "debriefed" by the CIA on their return home. The usual practice is to hole up in a hotel room for several days of intense interrogation.

Much of the debriefing, I've learned over the years, is agreed to freely and willingly by individual newsmen untroubled by the world's image of them as spies. In

at least one case, as admitted to me by the Latin-American specialist on one of our mass-circulation weekly newsmagazines, the debriefing took place very reluctantly after his initial refusal to cooperate was vetoed by his superiors. But depending on the particular foreign crises or obsessions at the moment, some of the eager sessions with the CIA debriefers bring handsome remuneration. Anyone recently returned from the erupted Philippines can probably name his price.

Despite its great power and its general unaccountability, the CIA dreads exposés. Perhaps because of a "prickly rebel" family reputation stretching over three generations, the CIA has never approached me about any of the 48 countries I have visited, including four (China, Hungary, Cuba, and North Vietnam) that had been placed off-limits by the State Department. But the secret agency showed intense interest in my travels to those "verboten" lands. In fact in those dark days, Eric Sevareid once told me that Allen Dulles, the intelligence

gatherer, differed with brother Foster Dulles, the Calvinist diplomat about the wisdom of the self-defeating travel bans.

Years later, I learned that the U. S. "vice-consul" in Budapest who twice came to my hotel to demand (unsuccessfully) my passport as I transited Hungary en route home from China in 1957 was, in fact, a CIA agent operating under a Foreign Service cover. During a subsequent lecture tour, I met socially in Kansas City a man who had served his Army tour of duty in mufti, on detached service in North Africa and elsewhere with the National Security Agency. Out of curiosity I asked him what would be the "premium" price for a newsmen's debriefing on out-of-bounds China. He thought for a moment and then replied: "Oh, about \$10,000." Out of the CIA's petty cash drawer.

My first awareness of the CIA's special use of minority-group newsmen abroad came at the time of the 1955 Afro-Asian summit conference at Bandung, Indonesia. Through Washington sources (including Marquis Childs of the St. Louis Post Dispatch), Cliff Mackay, then editor of the Baltimore Afro-American, discovered—and told me—that the government was planning to send at least one black correspondent to "cover" the historic gathering.

The "conduit" for the expense money and "fee" was the director of a "moderate" New York-based national organization, supported by many big corporations, that has long worked against employment discrimination. The CIA cash was passed to the organization's director by a highly placed Eisenhower administration official overseeing Latin-American affairs who later became governor of a populous Middle Atlantic state, and whose brothers and family foundation have long been heavy contributors to the job opportunity organization.

Because of the serious implications for a press supposedly free of governmental ties, I relayed this information to the American Civil Liberties Union. I also told Theodore Brown, one of A. Philip Randolph's union associates in the AFL-CIO Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters. Ted's response has always stuck in my

memory: "I'm one step ahead of you, Bill. President Sukarno and the Indonesian government know all about this, and they are particularly incensed at having a man of color sent to spy in their country."

Cold-war readiness to "cooperate" with spy agencies, whether motivated by quick and easy money (I've often wondered if under-the-counter CIA payments have to be reported on income tax returns!) or spurred by a misconceived patriotism, had its precedent in World War I and in the revolutionary-counterrevolutionary aftermath. In the summer of 1920 Walter Lippmann, his wife, and Charles Merz published in the New Republic an exhaustive survey of how the New York Times had reported the first two years of the Russian revolution. They found that on 91 occasions—an average of twice a week—Times dispatches out of Riga, Latvia, buttressed by editorials, had "informed" readers that the revolution had either collapsed or was about to collapse, while at the same time constituting a "mortal menace" to non-Communist Europe. Lippmann and his associates attributed the misleading coverage to a number of factors. Especially cited in the survey were the transcending win-the-war and anti-Bolshevik passions of Times personnel, as well as "undue intimacy" with Western intelligence agencies.

After 1959, when Fidel Castro came to power after having ousted the corrupt pro-American Batista regime, Miami became a modern-day Riga: a wild rumor factory from where Castro's "death" and imminent overthrow were repeatedly reported for several years. Both in that city of expatriates and also in Havana, "undue intimacy" with the CIA caused most North American reporters covering the Cuban revolution to echo and to parrot official U. S. optimism about the Bay of Pigs invasion.

In the summer of 1961, on my fourth visit to that revolutionary island, a Ministry of Telecommunications official told me of a not untypical incident shortly before the invasion. Through mercenaries and through thoroughly discredited Batistians, the CIA was masterminding extensive sabotage inside Cuba—a policy doomed to failure not only because anti-Castro endeavors lacked a popular base, but also because kindergartens, department stores during shopping hours, and similar public places

children in their classrooms and women where they shop.

On one such occasion a bomb went off at 9:08 p. m. Five minutes earlier, at 9:03 p. m., an ambitious U. S. wire-service correspondent filed an "urgent press" dispatch from the Western Union teleprinter in his bureau office, reporting the explosion that, awfully for him, came five minutes after the CIA's scheduled time. When that correspondent and most of his U. S. colleagues were locked up for a week or two during the CIA-directed Bay of Pigs invasion and were then expelled, many U. S. editorial writers were predictably indignant.

Except perhaps in Washington itself and in the United Nations delegates' lounge, the CIA department on journalism probably busier abroad than world newsmen at home. In 1961, during a televised interview, Walt Lippmann referred casually to the CIA's bribing of foreign newsmen (editors as well as the working press), especially at the time of critical elections. All over the world governments and political leaders, in power and in opposition, can usually name the journalistic compatriots who are known to be or strongly suspected of being on the CIA's bountiful payroll. I believe it was Leon Trotsky who once observed that anyone who engages in intelligence work is always uncovered sooner or later.

Even neutralist countries learned to become distrustful of U. S. newsmen. In early 1961 Prince Norodom Sihanouk expelled a black reporter after just 24 hours. In an official statement the Ministry of Information alleged that he "is known to be not only a journalist but also an agent of the CIA." In a number of Afro-Asian countries, entry visas for U. S. correspondents, particularly on a first visit, can be approved only by the prime minister or other high official.

As recently as a generation ago it would have been unthinkable for most U. S. editors, publishers, newscasters, and reporters to acquiesce in intelligence debriefings, not to mention less "passive" operations. What Edward Murrow denounced as the cold-war concept of press and university as instruments of foreign policy had not yet spread over the land. In the years before the Second World War, if any government agent had dared to solicit the cooperation of a William Allen

# Hanoi and The Cuban Specter

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By C. L. Sulzberger

PARIS—Historians may eventually decide the most significant aspect of the Indochina war was that it never produced a superpower confrontation resembling the nuclear showdown over Cuba just ten years ago.

It may be arguable that what occurred in the Caribbean at the end of October, 1962, had a profound if indirect influence on what was to happen in Vietnam during the subsequent decade.

Looking back on events that led Chairman Khrushchev to the Cuban gamble, it is now possible to discern his growing overconfidence. After having met Mr. Kennedy in Vienna, he told me the American President impressed him as being unable to face up to the Berlin crisis then festering.

"Kennedy is too young," he said (Sept. 8, 1961). "He lacks the authority and prestige to settle the issue correctly. He is afraid to take up that position and that is why he has introduced immobilization measures." Mr. Khrushchev gave two clues to his possible behavior although I was not shrewd enough to realize this.

He said: "If Cuba were subjected to attack, it would have every right to expect assistance from other peace-loving countries. . . . We would certainly not ignore a request for assistance." He also indicated exaggerated faith in Russia's nuclear arsenal, saying it was being armed with "several" 100-megaton warheads of such destructive power as "to make would-be aggressors think twice."

Khrushchev probably didn't then contemplate the possibility that thirteen months later he would have dispatched missiles and nuclear warheads secretly to Cuba. S.D.E.C.E., the French intelligence service, reported some clues early in October and the C.I.A. established overwhelming confirmation through aerial surveyance.

The result is history. Mr. Kennedy reacted with calm toughness and sent Dean Acheson abroad to alert our allies. France's President de Gaulle told Acheson it was unnecessary to show him photographs of the Soviet missiles "because obviously a great Government like yours would not risk war for nothing." He assured Washington of French support.

Some lesser allies suggested dismantling U.S. missile bases in Turkey to save Mr. Khrushchev's face. Several suspected what Moscow really sought was Western abandonment of

## FOREIGN AFFAIRS

On Nov. 9, 1962, Mr. Kennedy told me he was "astonished" at the speed with which the Russians managed to pull their missiles out of Cuba but added that he couldn't understand why Khrushchev had gone there in the first place. If he had thought America wasn't going to fight in the heart of an area of its own vital interest (the President speculated), he surely must have assumed we weren't going to fight in Berlin. Therefore, he asked: "Why didn't he go straight for Berlin?"

On Nov. 20 the President said in another conversation that he had learned much from the terrible episode. At the start "you don't know whom to believe and whom to disbelieve. But I can do the job much better now."

The crisis produced several repercussions. Mr. Khrushchev sent a message to British Prime Minister Macmillan saying the West should not try to push Russia around on Berlin or make the mistake of thinking the Cuba showdown proved Moscow was "soft."

NATO endorsed President Kennedy's desire to increase the Alliance's conventional strength because Cuba had demonstrated that the use of such strength in a crisis area could force an adversary to be the first to explode nuclear weapons and thereby risk mass destruction.

The Russians vastly accelerated their naval building program and began to move persistently into the Mediterranean. This process coincided with dismantling of the U.S. missile sites in Turkey.

Washington promised to take no physical action against Cuba's regime and this in turn strengthened the hand of Latin-American revolutionary movements for some time to come. De Gaulle decided he would never again allow France to be drawn into crises outside the European area and loosened French NATO ties.

This historical effect of the Cuban confrontation on Vietnam was indirect. President Kennedy certainly didn't reduce American intervention; he souped it up. But the lesson of 1962 wasn't lost. Despite U.S. attacks on Hanoi, even while Kosygin was there, or bombings right up to China, and despite the U.S. blockade of Haiphong, Moscow and Peking reacted with calculated calm.

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ter of nuclear war was too dangerous to contemplate. Ultimately, Cuba thus made the Vietnam crisis manageable.

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**The Washington Merry-Go-Round**

# Kissinger's Command Is a Hot Spot

**By Jack Anderson**

Every day, coded messages flood into Washington from our embassies, military commands and intelligence outposts all over the world. The most urgent telegrams are funneled into Henry Kissinger's command post in the White House. Digests of overnight intelligence reports are delivered each morning to President Nixon.

From sources with access to this intelligence flow, here are some recent highlights:

**New Offensive?**—Privately, Henry Kissinger is optimistic about the prospects of a cease-fire in Vietnam. Yet intercepted messages indicate that North Vietnam is preparing for a renewed offensive. Our military intelligence has found no trace, however, that Russia has replaced the tanks and artillery the North Vietnamese lost in their spring offensive. They were able last spring to sneak heavy hardware into South Vietnam virtually undetected. But the best available intelligence suggests that both Russia and China have cut back military shipments to North Vietnam. Hanoi's military preparations, therefore, may be for a limited attack upon a political target, perhaps even Saigon itself. But no one really knows whether the guns will be silenced or booming when the voters go to the polls on Nov. 7.

**Soft on Thieu**—Hanoi may be softening slightly on its around the world.

Arch enemy, President Thieu. In the secret truce talks, North Vietnam's Le Due Tho has emphasized that the Saigon regime must be dismantled and replaced by a tripartite government dominated by neither side. But he has indicated that Saigon can choose anyone it wishes to the new government, that neither side should have a veto over the other's appointments. The implication is that Hanoi would not object if Saigon appointed the hated Thieu as a member of the tripartite government.

**Mao's Vow**—China's supreme ruler, Mao Tse-tung, told visiting Japanese Prime Minister Kakuei Tanaka fiercely that the Chinese would resist to the death any encroachments by Russia. A CIA report on the secret Mao-Tanaka talks quotes old Mao as saying China would sacrifice its own people to prevent Soviet domination. He cited the fate of his former heir apparent, Lin Piao, who died in a plane crash fleeing to Russia after attempting a pro-Soviet coup against Mao.

**Chou's Opposition**—The Central Intelligence Agency reports that Chinese Premier Chou En-lai is still encountering opposition inside Peking's ruling circle. Chou's opponents are upset over his policy of detente with the United States, Japan and the West. They contend that the detente has hurt China's credibility with revolutionary forces

Soviet Shipments—A classified State Department analysis charges that Israel's forays across her borders against the Palestinian guerrillas have given the Soviets a pretext for strengthening their foothold in Syria and Iraq. Military shipment have been sent not only to Syria and Iraq but to the Palestinian guerrillas directly. Contrary to press reports of a Soviet "airlift" to Syria, however, the airlift consisted of only four transport planes, which have ceased to make regular deliveries. But the shipments, though no more than token military aid, have had the effect of strengthening Soviet bonds with the Arab hotheads. The analysis concludes, nevertheless, that Russia wouldn't likely risk war for Syria, Iraq or any other Arab country.

**African Wildman**—The efforts to placate Uganda's wildman, General Idi Amin, appear to have backfired. He has ordered the Asians, who had become the backbone of Uganda's economy, out of the country. He has made impossible demands upon neighboring Tanzania. He has made and broken promises to visiting mediators. He has imposed harsh martial law upon his country, charging that Tanzania, India and even Britain are planning to invade his small country. For the sake of black African solidarity, a host of black African leaders have made pilgrimages to Uganda to placate General Amin. But

a CIA report suggests all this attention has merely enlarged his ego and made him more difficult than ever.

**Castro "Uncouth"**—Intelligence reports acknowledge a rise in anti-U.S. feeling throughout Latin America. But apparently Cuban Dictator Fidel Castro's attempts to exploit U.S. unpopularity for his own purposes have failed.

A typical message from our defense attache in Ecuador, where Castro visited last year, describes the top Ecuadorean military brass as anti-U.S. but also anti-Castro. The message quotes them as calling Castro "uncouth" and "not the great leader that many people consider him to be."

**Cuba-Panama Friendship**—A secret CIA cable, reporting on a conversation with a Cuban intelligence officer known only as "Alfredo" quotes him as saying that "the Cuban government generally supports the PJD (Panama's military junta) and General Omar Torrijos, the head of Panama, but wants to find ways to encourage Torrijos to move further to the left. 'Alfredo' suggested that . . . leftists in Panama form a Panama-Cuba Friendship Society, which could promote friendship with Cuba, put pressure on Torrijos from the left and possibly be used as the center for certain unspecified Cuban activities."

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